

DNREC Continues Working to Assess and Clean Up Oil Spill in Delaware Bay and Southern Beaches

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control continues working today to assess and clean up an oil spill that came ashore yesterday at Broadkill Beach and has now affected several more southerly coastal locations, including Beach Plum Island near Cape Henlopen, the Roosevelt Inlet and Lewes.

Some of the oil had been carried out into the Delaware Bay by last night's high tide night and had dispersed elsewhere on the coast by noon today. DNREC and the U.S. Coast Guard were deploying environmental contractors in the Broadkill area this morning to clean up as much oil as possible before another tide carried more oil out into the bay. Cleanup operations were proceeding under the unified command between DNREC and the U.S. Coast Guard. More cleanup workers from Coast Guard contractors as well as mobilized DNREC staff were expected on the coast throughout the day.

Monday evening's DNREC estimate of five barrels spilled may grow, but there is no further estimate on the spill's size at this time, and the source for the oil has not been determined. The cleanup is expected to take multiple days, as globs and pools of oil must be removed from beaches manually.

DNREC Emergency Response has no reported or sighted impacts to wildlife, and also noted the vast numbers of shorebirds and horseshoe crabs that flock to the Bay coast each summer had departed on their annual migration elsewhere. DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin asked that the public continue to report any oil

sighted on- or offshore by calling the DNREC toll-free environmental hotline at 800-662-8802.

While the source of the oil spill was still unknown, DNREC provided samples of the oil today to the U.S. Coast Guard to be analyzed for a “petroleum fingerprint” that might determine where it came from. The oil was described by DNREC Emergency Response as a “heavy fuel oil” likely leaking from an operating vessel, not crude oil from the hold of a tanker.

The spill, which spanned three-quarters of a mile of upper Delaware Bay coastline last evening, was estimated this morning to have spread to up to 7 miles of beach this morning, with DNREC noting that tide had fragmented the oil from larger pooling to smaller-size speckling on the beaches. DNREC’s Emergency Response Team environmental staff gauged the size of the spill Monday after collaborating with Delaware State Police’s Aviation Unit on a reconnaissance flight over the upper Bay.

DNREC will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state’s natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with DNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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